



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “A.D. Series: The Power of Discipleship”

Ps. Mike Cantrell - May 31, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Have you ever helped a stranger? How did it go?
- Have you ever received help from a stranger? How did it feel?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you were afraid of some stranger(s)?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

Acts, chapter nine, provides us with the story of Ananias. The brief biblical account of this man is easily overlooked in the bigger story of the spiritual conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became one of the most influential followers of Jesus throughout all history. Ananias provides us with a great example of someone who made a significant difference in the life of another person by discipling them.

Bethel values discipleship. Our primary icon is that of two hands pressed together in the posture of prayer: a black hand and a white hand. (See the graphic above.) These hands represent all three of our core values: devotion, diversity, and discipleship. The way they symbolize discipleship is with the idea that two lives are touching one another.

In Matthew 4:19 (ESV), Jesus said, *“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* The Bible consistently teaches us that everyone who follows Jesus is called by him to seek to reconcile other people to God through Jesus and to help them grow as his disciples.

The historical account of Ananias provides us with some basic lessons about discipleship.

#### **Discipleship is surrendering our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Acts 9:10 (ESV) *Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”*

Ananias was a disciple, a follower of Jesus, the kind that Jesus called commands us to be. When God called him, his immediate response was, “Here I am, Lord.” Is that our response?

In Matthew 16:24 (ESV) Jesus tells us, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

In John 14:15 (ESV) Jesus said, *“If you love me, obey my commands.”*

Ananias denied himself and followed Jesus as Lord.

#### **Discipleship is partnering with God to reach people.**

Acts 9:11–19 (ESV) *And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias*

answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

God calls each of us to reach people for Jesus. He calls us to love them, pray for them, communicate the Gospel to them, and serve them no matter who they are.

Sadly, there are several popular myths that keep many Christians from getting involved in discipling others. These include the following.

- The Myth of Mentoring, which says, "I haven't been adequately mentored."
- The Myth of the Man of God, which says, "I'm not the preacher or pastor."
- The Myth of Maturity, which says, "I'm not spiritually mature enough yet."

In the light of Scriptural teaching, all of these are false. God is ready to use anyone and everyone who believes in him and desires to follow him. The Gospels and Acts are full of stories of people who began to tell family members and others about Jesus immediately after encountering him themselves.

We need to be the Ananias where God has called us to minister to people. We don't have to be the superstar apostle. We are simply called to be witnesses for Jesus and make disciples like Ananias.

### **Discipleship is laying foundations in people's lives.**

Acts 9:11–19 (ESV) *So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.*

Ananias laid spiritual foundations in Saul's life. He spoke God's word to Saul, making clear the call to follow Jesus as Lord. He laid hands on Saul that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit. He baptized Saul. And as the text implies Saul then spent many days with Ananias and with the other Christian disciples at Damascus, which we can assume meant that he was learning from them and growing in his knowledge of Jesus.

These are the very same things which the New Testament teaches we should pass on to others: the lordship of Jesus, water baptism, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Of course there is more to teach people to obey. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples of all nations, which includes teaching them to obey everything he commanded. But the things which the Bible explicitly tells us were passed on by Ananias to Saul are clearly foundational.

To help you be a better disciple and to help you disciple someone else, please see *The Purple Book: Biblical Foundations for Building Strong Disciples*. This book provides numerous inductive Bible studies covering twelve foundational topics. If you've never gone through this book, we encourage you to do so, either by yourself or with others in a small group or in a class. (See [www.everynationstore.com](http://www.everynationstore.com).)

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- Have you embraced Jesus as Lord? How are you doing in terms of honoring him as Lord?
- What are some important spiritual foundations according to Scripture? Are they solid in your life?
- When was the last time you were helped lay foundations in someone's life? Are you seeking to?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Acknowledge Jesus as Lord afresh in prayer. Ask for help from his Spirit to obey him.
- Ask God for more insight into the Scriptures and for spiritual strength in your soul.
- Ask God for opportunities to communicate the Gospel to others & lay foundations in their lives.